

familiar bifurcations



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xPress(ed)

familiar bifurcations by Clayton A. Couch

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Dedicated to my loving wife, Lauren.

I. Personals

This Smallness of Scale

Bedeviled songs
that liquidate this summer
accept the affect of weather.

You blush under nervous
clouds, and water the plants,
heedless of afternoon hail.

From a backyard speaker,
Kind of Blue carries on air
as a favorite child plays.

On old dirt bikes, the kids
speed off into comic book
tales of enemy forests

and fields full of mystery,
and all life unfolds its odd
humor in those old seasons

soon to be buried,
as if childhood panorama
never left the blanket

of mirrors we all looked
into when we watched orb
spiders spin monograms

into silken nets, charged
with absolute violences.
Once caged, we screamed

a shamanic hunt turned
towards the solitude of male
bears, just now figuring

the world's squatnesses
into equations and extensions
of the old dream that slaves

under drive for profit.
How the wear of property

life left a quiet sadness.

These brick houses relinquish
ghosts so infrequently quiet
that *no* ear can hear vibrations

of sobbing, when the liquor
and scabs wore off her skin.
I can't believe the vase moved

on its own, but in religions,
hours grow parabolas earthward
around the muscle's rhythmic

respect for breathing thoughts.
I can't remember her gifts
beneath the tree these days.

Red-shift Recession

Manipulation of light's speed proceeds
in hidden laboratories funded by strict
corporate interests, foaming to the bank.

Recall mystery meat from the frozen
food section. We can barely keep our
wine from sloshing out on the wax floor.

I'm done with the whole uranium puzzle,
and you should've been done with it, too,
said the spook to suit with gun in hand.

When I think of cutting off your hand
for stealing, the immediacy of my preserved
meal jumps its plate and into my mouth.

Down by the pool a teenage couple
talks the in and outs of taking a week
off from their relationship. If they knew.

This job hinges upon an ability to bullshit
your way through emergency situations
without bulletproof vest or explicit directions.

You once worked alongside her at the cafe,
and so she pretends *not* to know your face.
There's a reason why this town's so hot.

Poetic Fission For Dummies

Risk. We gash these enterprising road signs apart,
and soothe a mechanized taint, a submissive lark,
and a weekend regret; for here, just a bulldozer away
from suburbia, drudgery *is* rewarding. The inmates
linger at roadside pick-up, and I've got old workers
devolving as you speak. Crustacean upbringing hears
this winged Oversoul, and darts up in circulating hellos
from the spewing mantle. More trust binds castes
together, and shortly, accrued material wealth sings
its personal airing of what lies beneath the hot fangs;
but invisible knots all conversation into some mere
bind, a reflection of the morning we first departed.
So blue was the body's surface, I sold these ligaments
to recover some idea that we're separating too fast.
You can telescope backward: this dance excludes
mystery, and pulsar beeps a mourning mixed flow.

Eleven Cracked Haiku

wreak	a humid thought
dialogic forget	dead leaves
gnats hum out tunes	cool
saw cuts	optical
window	wash transit busride
woodpecker taps tin	
in crossing that bridge	
automatic heart	seer
aortic bomb	lab
liver jumps	'round block
its bird chirp	mocking pine tree
coven candle mass	
pullover table	
wells dug deep	disease voter
bellow madness	trap
image rhythm	<i>crack</i>
petal wilt through	attention
jihad curve lungful	
shrine descend	prayer
bully ramble	treasury
green tea lock	health leaves
treat space	moonwalk snow
withstand wither	ectoplasm
<i>nibble</i>	saturn son
ring vitamin lack	
ear drum incessant	hammer
heat	pump cultivate
exquisite	spark bolt
furnitures avatar	feet
tinsel	morning wake
genes	control blue earth
retrieve wild land	offside probe

credit hour

uproot

Familiar Bifurcations

Exercise the muscles of a vibrant parallel universe body.
What you'll smell in old attic boxes resembles what the moth
said when its beat continued against our cracked window.

Reading staves off dementia. While a road crew fills potholes
with smoking tar, more apartments are razed by the songwriting
Senator with bad hair. I sweat, waiting for those cops to pick

up Dad on the superhighway just outside of matter/energy
relationships. If the soul grows from your heart like fruit,
its seeds grace our plates just before dessert hour arrives.

Falling through ceiling, the heaviest of spirits is paved in fat.
A sharp pain ends mental games before the final move
can play, and neurologists explicate the news right in front

of the children. We do it; just do it. You wonder how gods
debased their names with imprints on manufactured goods
and bads, in order to tame a social disease before it blooms.

Before Coffee

Woke up walking
on a column of thought,
thought that resembled
air under the influence
of barely perceptible spell.

Water keeps
running out the bottom,
following me down
pipes and into basement.

Is this exciting language?

Too bad for me and you,
it's all that's here
this dank morning.

Write.

Stare at a wall;
it's a bourgeois
fascination.

Folks waiting for active
zooming, electric
cute and tempting.
If the tavern emptied
there'd be no tables
left for this sloshed
brain, cold-called
since childhood.

Memory of swimming
pools and mud
castles green
with envy, and paved
lichen roots of trees
play under dirt,
odor of pesticide,
and burning hornet nests.

Sweet smell
of summers watching
black and white

kung fu on Sunday
afternoon with forehead
swollen from a black
widow bite, and heat
don't buy you sleep.

No seconds unless
you wash your hands,
and pry open dead
walkie-talkie locked
just in case the others
settle down from space.

No limits on imaginary
war zones, and conflicted
heroes cardboard

can't make up for dead

days in schools.

No school, there's
no school for me,
and that your sons
and daughters settled
into naptime along
side yours truly
is a matter of utmost
urgency.

Reproduction
saps all agency
from the taxpayer
war no more,
but please dump
all these excess
males in the nearest
landfill.

I'll eat trash
first, and forget
about disseminating
my brain's goo
all over the torn up
globe, ragged with
history and battled
for nothing more
than land and oil –
gold's so passé.

Who cares about
your insomnia?

I'll read you Bataille,
and that'll set the eye
lids shut.

Upstairs

noise stops moment to relate. snap,
rewake and hear: boards creak, slap
voices, send drum music below –
a beat, a bang and a moving, a moving down.

create sleep image: slip and tumble
downstairs, head hitting bricks
at bottom, sick rattle in throat, and someone
vomits green goo. ghost is home.

neighbors in name alone. young kids,
but kids aren't kids around here:
the noise from way up above perfumes
their brains with sloppy rhythms, the musak

channels from dark matter way above,
and it's just us singing back through time.

Miscommunication

what's sad is not so much the eyes really
it's that so much gets said which cannot be
read in any one way by the listener for even
birdsong sounds old and worn down in certain
climes and doesn't *truly* make sense without
a lively lens to interpret the incoming "data"
for those who aren't quite conscious of sear
I us you they it not whether some wind blows
up under thought's feeling but how the grow
wing of the brother the sister claims hold
of a 3AM waking dream urge that you miss
during lunch hour with librarians around
the table serving as a meeting place for dive
I did digital thinks when younger fires were
set in places that net work the son away

Weekday Revelation

and again and again

another pattern emerged
from canopies of twisted sky

and cities stopped

action of day
and cars scrapped against guardrails

and smokestacks blasted song
where soot once pushed

I

and birds chirped new words
in quickened feathered tongues

and children smelled
the sweetness
of burning light

turned solid
by the altered glass
of broken
windowpanes in schools

Deep Thought

retrain the bright in jars
new paint on the walls
where the food's prepared

by hand and outside light
strikes twice pound back
ground echo electricity

skidding cross lake
surface where we are
all surfaces when depths

are plumbed to farthest
bottoms the crappie
feed on Christmas trees

old and forgotten ornaments
dissolved into the attics
of old homes and closets

Last Year's Beach Vacation

1.

grant messenger her bliss and supply pumping blood
excerpted from news organ the cancerous psyche still
sings its way off white sands of island beaches where
the troubled cracked shells tumble in a tumult of waves

hear these low crashes against vast points of night
out among horizon's far-flung nets laden with shrimp
the harbor smells of mosquito and metropolitan neglect
where we swing in the heat and oversee seamy return

of cruiser steel in its cloak of absolute vision and million
dollar missile stash a southern city taxes casual drug trade
waxing magnanimous as a recall of hoary aristocratic junk
flexing cotton-tradin' muscles and simmering in witness

2.

no doubt i'd take that million dollars
like a heathen finding his eternal soul
and you know i'd spend it all in wisest
fashions and invest heavily on *your* wit

where of course all my aimed wanders
upriver mean nothing and you saved
your savior from alligator insanities
of a certain horned moon skidded

with slash marks of atv country pride
death's a salt marsh where few crabs
flourish on diets of turkey legs mixed
with boundless human inattention in heat

3.

combers of booze and last-minute piracy
you and i seek a past on suburbanized
vacation islands where the atlantic lost
its progeny to surfers and connoisseurs

of some escapist sea breeze phantasmagoria
and the gulls look on picnic tables and old
graves in black eyes all opportunistically dull
with brains of bored sailors dreaming like kings

and as the tropical storm swings back west
we watch as that wall of rain promises anew
of inexorable exorcistic doubts of predator
cultures churning warm with diatomic bliss

Broken Glass

Shards sleeping quietly,
there on the sidewalk,

scattered around skinny
blades of grass. Green

shark teeth sharp-edged
with the fading menace

of sun's long afternoon.
Pieces to a buried puzzle,

waiting for you or me
to put them back together,

but I wasn't there when
the shattering took place,

and I cannot pretend
to reshape this bottle –

cannot know its look –
from only broken teeth.

Creation Myth

Sit, stand, walk away with nothing intact –
there's your life in a second, dropped on
its head; and what's happening in less
than a second doesn't register to senses
honed in on bigger things, so instruments

can hear what the cosmos whispers to
itself, in the process of prodding words
forth from foam. I use it, nonplussed.
Thought burst forth extinct and ready
for fossilization, all apocalyptic 'n shit.

“Where would we be *without* the approval
of form?” I'd ask the class, half-asleep
on wings the birds drop down for a bath.
Can *you* watch this film without laughing?
Might a Monday lend its energies

to cohesive writing (no lending out books
for instructional use only)? Perhaps weeding
is necessary in these fallow gardens,
though thoughts forget themselves before
censors can record the heavy mix.

Daydream Geometry

connective tissue it *is* you
it's assured that death captures

quality for the air of it all
found on so many gas giants

a sneeze an oncoming aural
you an indoor smoking area

table you could eat
of talking to myself

can claim knowledge climate
settlement in daze gone bye

and knock civility aside
time in photographic

lacks the corrosive energy
these are our heroes

companion that sells
placed just light upon

backwards working slight aslant
no outsider world no subject

as truth there's no
over and above highness

Easter Outline

Where we settle into zombified ritual zoning,
along the aisle leading up to an open book,
while sunlight fractures stained glass overhead.
Mixed sad air with stale bread and wine tired.
My body is your body is their body and *not*
flexible characters in a theological sitcom.
If I could shake the hand of old stoning fire,
I'd pray my hopes into a sea of blood, support
forecast. The tornado and burning bush smoke;
there's no resurrection worth the brain stem.
Cut all ties to world without end, and entrance.

Edge of Day

These worlds, stars, and galaxies
of your lost anarchic dream
are replaced quickly with blues
and water and waves and sea,
and finally, your arm's asleep.

Siren wails from the distance,
wakes adrenalin from its gland,
and brings you back to morning;
urgency lurks in the background,
and *always* muted by the dark.

Roosters announce edge of day
from nearby backyard shadows,
and you, just slightly mental,
would like to know where worlds
get lost in a simple translation.

Emergences

october chills blue
uneasy morning;
wasps, lazy and cold,

orbit browning leaves.
oak sap spots windshield.
tree shelters insect

parasites in wood,
limbs gnarled and aching.
torture perfected.

a touch regretful
that – without remorse –
the buzz doesn't sting.

taxing roots system,
soils black memory
and symbols of bore.

when globes empty out,
they surface strange wings.

All in the Family

Bathing go here.
If eyes roll back
In labeled head,

Course blood
Vessels explode
And end Venus

Hot desert wind.
I was a swamp
Rat, crawling under

Cypress knees,
Scouting the floor
For leftovers near,

And smelling air
For predator fear.
Is this life the one

We come to after
Birth? Am *I* reborn
In fur? Settled in

Soak; little by little,
Slither the film.
Outside images

Photograph famous
Focus-group family,
Primates on green.

Tongues

1.

predisposed pose, this disreputable mental territory,
as if it connoted something marked, something to be
conquered. it's certain the drinks are easy on talk.
we haven't seen each other in so long, it's tough. too
loud, the daffodil blooms after we've cleaned up all
morning. the desk looks like a parody of organizational
task delegation. om. egalitarian slash parody of linear
studiousness. example of aimless flowering, the hum
of the blender perfectly pitched to annoy any dream
the cat might have on her ottoman, sometimes lazy.
there would be a place for news filler here, I guess.

2.

hun greasy die green mean, if oh penned can
madrigal gall stoned, and curl pages overlap
in stand on arch victory. we reason able wrong
motor ring, psych cull off post repair of twin
cities animated by zombie. oh zombie, flesh
wound a round my index finger, terror tories.
con serve a shun, null wisdom. prayer for sup
ream court justices quick demise – we put
the fun in fun dumb mentals. we've done
been down graded, flung from a make shift
catapult. a universe is full of only single-storied
homes, perpetrated in a kind of paranormal
hovering, extended by a loving old horticulturist;
when it comes to planting seeds, he freezes.
yes, let's consider for a moment, if you will,
the life cycle of the martian prion or complex
protein when it enters your fucking earthborn
bloodstream, taking your RNA to school
fish sure in the skin – it is your kin beckoning,
wading through five layers of superstring soup.

3.

what salad? small molecular focal funeral
for mass consumption, gobble. eat
and sling it. shoulder the sole notice, an
envelope calling for new roof above us,
and gossip crawls up to the desktop,
settles in for a nice chat over luncheon.
we all love a nice mincing, don't we just?
you could see whites of their blanks, all
cuddling up to a whole miserable con-
session, where we'll forget what could
have happened, once the fullness drops.
if I were a meddlesome sort of creature,
I'd slit the absolutism out with a short
barbwire excavation, engineered before
consciousness set you off like alarm bells
hollering for a nonexistent owner today.

4.

bladed hissing tongues planetary motion.
forked, attuned global exchange communes
inevitable red roses. watered memory chip,
old song, you spin in center, jump morbid
freak, blob plasmatic and superheated,
holding out curve mathematic. tongued hung,
redress ancien regime, cooling south-spice
jugular deep, pulsing yellow curried idea.
off-road enamel, and unpaved with irony.

5.

without question, can the runaround ever
end? personnel issue dealing cards across
the table to brusque individual metaphor
for anger, over-managed. likely ready to
burst, an overripe cant, a lope so damaged,
there's little reason to catch the leader
blasé, or may we steal your manners tomorrow.
would you liken my face to a certain bedeviled
chemical track? there was a restoration
in store for the mind, and some plants don't
stand up well to high winds. they've buzzed

our neighborhood eyes present; our words
wander out the crack under the door,
and that presentation drones onward, hurtling
progress as if we were built for it, intrinsic
to interaction and tribal noise. under
the funk, the drip of sad is a human.

6.

mustard gas reverie, spitting a minister's daughter. exist.
devil food, changing litter for a red roll in the barnyard,
able to hone lust so sharp all smarts dilute into street
fire hydrant game of lost residents in an old hotel
or libertine inn, coughing up blood and shoplifting near-
by grocery bags under button-downs in midsummer's
schizophrenic inactivity. some divides must go untrammelled.
if we talked of beach, dazed in the heat of the car's front
seat, the choice of venues could've included a glimpse
into that LA-freeway soul, divorced from intentional act
and on sale, running through the blocks on serious fire.
hose you down with humdrum, and see what mutates last
under commune vacated. vacation, you left what words me.

7.

my air raid's a cushion for the spongiform soil where you grow
related lives, strung out on the clothesline behind the shack
on fire. where two people outside the beltway can fall in love;
yes, but not comprehend the different languages and damaged
words they've used since kids. how you wish consumers were
closer? the malls would remain empty for a thousand years if
psychoses could ramble in those woods with fear of farmer's
shotgun wedding, and the estranged fungus crawls its spores
through inexorable decadences, prey for a toothless mind.
over matter's dead spirit, you grow drunk at the smell of weed –
lovers' last goodbye on the plane to nowhere and back again.
let the currents carry voices to newer ears, alert with envy.

8.

typo, and the same porch to hear thrum of central air
kick day's heat away. he checked our passes by the lake,
and now everyone has departed some fourteen days

ago, where present meets past, zones in on the appetite.
what could active be feeding upon if not the signs
of gravity, sharp leaves of the holly bushes where lizards
play sun games just far enough away from bluejays.
yearn is impossible, and hugging what crumbles soft
opens no eye. a project of reclamation, of reslithering
roots into a home's crawlspace. yes, the grandfather
clock doesn't work, so it sits atop mantle and looks
imposing in its quietude – the onus is on an observer.
what love a rabid raccoon can bite into landowners,
raking leaves and bagging refuse, getting air despite
the paint droplets blowing over from a next world.
understand long walks up to the shopping center
before putting in time at grocery store checkout.
run barcodes through scan bars of soap, corn chips,
cans of soup, pickled beets, rhubarb, roma tomatoes,
half gallons of skim milk, microwave pepperoni pizzas,
razors, chicken wings, snickers, cake mix, and packages
of stolen bacon on aisle three, so go get yourself some
cheap molasses. but what dysfunctional relationships
we had stealing from safes, getting caught fucking
in the cooler, and drinking beer on the loading dock.
the smell of cheap marijuana paved the early 90's
last, but least off course there was the gunshot
to the head, and they found your teeth in a ditch –
another executed kid who thought democracy
was a free-for-all spin in the satanic gold machine.

9.

speakeasy, jugular enunciate thunderhead, flinging off
wind and pellets of hail, this the bats know in sonar.
counted under pewter goblets, the numerologists
have determined that ghosts are the jilted images
of animated talkers who evolved some thirteen billion
years ago, when a first generation of stars dominated
spinning expanse. what do we do with these once-
future quiet flutterings? attempting to converse via
recollections of historical exercise, pieces of extra-
terrestrial encodings yelp gauge, and the electricity
airs constants. flashes listen for a freight train rail,
toast urn and relinquish the grail mythology singing
from lake. if material existence coalesced at very early
eras, there's no telling what happened after they departed

the surfaces. we are flatlanders summoning symbolic
languages before receiving authorization from above.

10.

squeeze, cool, loom, mollify deisel engine concession.
inch forward in the chair, entertainment value stirred
to superheated plasma survey. of unopened envelopes,
what envelopes this cloud of thoughts? where's the pay
phone? graphically-challenged lines, all space is a challenge,
an affront to utter silence. most children know how open
the whole, and collected wisdom cracks under pressure.
mad, a social gathering right here between the ears, out
in the provinces; yes, amid the Super Wal-Marts and
Taco Bells like a colour out of space just after rainfall.
voices reproduce themselves ad infinitum, never
having to pay income tax or visit the grocery store.
one day, when light is transferred over to molecular
chips, the planet's population explodes billions, multiplied
times trillions; and then the globe implodes, forming
its own little pocket universe out of nothing but shouts.
where does dialogue end, and static electricity begin?
shutter a Quaker's light, John Dee still invites them in.

11.

surprise, no. no writing yesterday, the circuit went blank.
kicked. where there's a headache, there's an unreasonable
thought. how nobody acknowledged the massacre, once
it seeped into the soil after the thunderstorm. always
raining, bats attach themselves to leg, bite the rabies.
foam-mouth human in the back, you know you need
shots. shorty – oh yes, the paranoia's so tasty. I love
to see the fright popped like soap bubbles getting
colorful, before you expire into just fist fight.

12.

i work assignment, and assignment signs me.
sign another one, a document left unstable.
this is a sign of some precipice near the end,
where the zodiac signs a name in blood on TV.
we'll need your signature for timid purposes.
propose constitutional fortitude. signing off,

the ghost left its signature with a temperature.
genetic signs will expedite the end of solitude,
for non-human signs underlay all religious faith.
signs of life elude the most careful investigators.

13.

giganticism, it'll overtake you on your drive home. sensor of a code
stammered under skin pustules, welling up some pox of contentment.
aimless, there is life. the play cycle starts up again; we repeat experiment.
plants wilt in humid inattention. there, the signage causes battlefield
anxiety options. have them, but you don't. deus ex machina, he heard
the central vacuum swallowing texts, as if this congealing conference
could feed the masses, so vis-a-vis that's all folks. place towns grown
round train tracks in fields, we await the arrival of the device devising
escape routes. our outside, the bars judge user-friendly prog grim gnosis.

14.

ready-made regurgitate, idea worms
crawl in, and flood through singularity.
it's a shock, another earth and flood
geologic memory without technical
assistance, where stuck drugs merge
sharp peaks and foam on grains.
bacteria consuming toxic sludge,
where to pitch a tent in the ice haze.
baseball player, an occult visitation,
song of vermin, breeding across west.

15.

wobble hold fast, and demonstrate agile connection.
page after page of no signal, just long enough for explore
and conscious empty thread. carry the cold wet life
into wear, and judge what arc doesn't seem real
or even fake. uncovering hungry decisions, thirsts
love, polling what can render it backwards. sustain
a wired interaction jump, welding peoples destitute
of haggle. bungling, the favor of your reply congeals,
dwells at a discovery so terrible in the frenzy. observe
where words coalesce into sense. the cooking of nerves
hesitate in the middle wonder of composition.

mix verbal bloom, and sing a slightly more pollinated
version into being. raze towns and folks holding them up.
velcro borrowing a fasten, just a space program beyond
open. apply job technique towards a more favorable end.

Upshot

Awashed out, I cringe as part of the compositional process, singled on a witnessed road towards a sole simmer, high on light. Swallowed, lost words never to be read or reread, and night filters our experiences into scenes to be feared. I can't recall a political environment more conducted at large by appetite than recent memory, and you would historicize polar opposites. What's a monkey virus without a monkey to *talk* it into being? Most of us would translate ourselves into virtual lives before birth; let the aristocrats begone. Why is the past what happened to fiction, and when does it all come final to a rhythmical end? So many million-year eras enacted that these deities laugh about the high and mighty. Yearn is reason to cease progress, but what belongs when arrow shot tears unseen way back? When the sold fields play, demon hears your snore; my legs unplant the roots collected of childhood humid effort. Old movies giving black-and-white wonder back across a colorized future, and these planets dissect imagination freight, boxed among power games. What we wants: AM radios, tuned to UFO, channel ether.

II. Politicals

State Holiday Blues

this day's a tax credit
or perhaps a write-off

and off we go into rain
what's pulling you to shop

more of nationalized talk
yes they've held you down

ask bedlam for revolve
and the planets exert

useless to certify dialogue
if a licensing agency loses

you and i reach no end
to hacking away thickets

in our colonized thoughts
and they say we're united

when the air freezes shadow
vents in the ceiling revolt

Labor Law

fold expansion yells an anniversary mean
so tremble after orgasm bangs out verse

offside in eye of a developing amphibian
this moisture would not support tissues

prehensile and foundlings reject monkey
see or do jubilant hello under the hood

of metropolis gone running overtime
the pay's lousy a different era what

becomes of a self transplanted future
hysteria is all a student can hear while

growing around authority gang sign
summons magics of our will that closes

elementals to homo sapien shapes
gyrate and *don't* forget the daily slide

that can undo assumption on a heads
does where all knowledge grow

constitute ongoing rebellion value
deluded graduates you still kid

about the useless candle ushered
in and out of the job fair ferris wheel

crave or replace batteries on culture
henceforth garnered through no fault

Snarl

interstating the lanes
we cross medians and
sign certain language

to passing trucks roar
hauling from New
Jersey to Texas perhaps

unconscious of there
abouts potholes where
cracks in regime

show the gravel
of situation so sharp
tires me out passenger

seat when I'm thinking
of that show we saw
last night in my headline

vampires sucking out lives
right *there* onscreen award
1600 dollars to any young

thing willing to do
for company of thrills
and jet it to Prague

for a star dumb burned
with in sin sear rakes
leaning for a hopeless

look at the general pop
bubble bursting all across
states as capital meets

corporate stakes and garlic
transmission pulse eyes
a few good men and sociopaths

smile, it's the frown
of a twenty-first century

smothered in layers of clown

My Bad, Lieutenant

Juggle so many desires
and wanting it real bad.
They say from the back,

stuffing them bellies full.
Dictator of the arena
police pulls another car.

We were carrying heat,
loaded for bear here
on the hottest street.

Two Minutes (Of Your Time)

for the future, remember the labeled grub.
yes, the real world is an opportunity, but
the falls are slippery and so many dynamos
are left unmanaged. the fish cannot recall
the inventions of history and Tesla's mystery

is an angel. all the times of heaven are
falling to the West and death is just one
more subdivision in the American Dream,
unvisited – perhaps, but the canister on
the street is not going to be much dumber

tomorrow. plastered to the brick wall,
the citizens have – laughably – forgotten
how to ask a question. warm weather
is my friend, baby. give me lightning
and a couple of launched out elven

theories. geysers killed the string of
ghostly dust clouds. black hole puzzled
molecules and sought the dissolution
of cabled life. oh sure, lucifer principle
strikes it heavy. memes cancel out the

phantom, and the crop circles the human
group, ravenous pack, into a sickled cell
in a burnt-out starlight prison. search
for extraterrestrial life, but first conceal
the blisters on the bottom of your feet.

the fringe of science – science fiction
is the antenna of science? blasphemy
is a fundamental fallacy. glyph – kind
and answers – this word into reality.
stimulating answers to simple ages.

massive disruptions to religious caves,
where all the crazies hang out. god,
the humans aren't *just* nuts, they're
completely wrapped in aluminum foil.
why do these callers all have lisps?

Brainiac Mineral Accretions

"The degree of homogeneity in the world has greatly increased, while heterogeneity has come to be seen as almost pathological, or at least as a problem that must be eliminated."

A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History, Manuel De Landa

drudge ghastly a twirl of jump rope
yes redux we reduction together
addition double western eclipses
benighted pagan xenophobia run

youth schematic flipper hours wed
jade your pearls leach shells flung
regrets gone questioning rebellion
a red barrow outside vibrant spectrum

lest the dead drink mercury riddle
open in transient verdant royalty
that fisherman hooked on frozen entree
cunning clamor your sister sound off

red planet dressed terra formulate jamb
said teacher isthmus on ledge pang
gulp down these dreary weirding
being and time scantily gnashed no

kill it caress pungent sex if this voltage
jumble narration inoculate ocular New
Orleans craft on acidic graveyard con
version six point oh and *never* call me

by name paradise free cinema guess
numb flying craven lieutenant tenant
just and cavalier let's separate par
excellence rummage round artifice

cat citric trickster or treat these war
dogs dream say lead young Yeats long
path non-linear flog weeds cross plains
pave the coursings bright white city

Why I'm Not All Here, This Winter

Run, write on down to a rocky end,
out fishing on the pier for charcharodon
megalo-dons, and pulling one up out
of prehistory for a voracious look at kill.

Some forget the ocean and its bottom,
where things sink so simple and hide
away from steel beams and glass towers
lining the shores with reflective trade

boundaries that teem insectoid, if
the light shines just right on a winter
moon. Surrounded by ice crystals trapped
in suspended imagination, so the prose

comes out all loose and unwieldy.
And how do relationships grow any
direction? A land and a sea merge one
verse at a time, though we sleep here

sweating the fears away. Shiver. Quick
paperwork recoils at the sight of pen
swimming ink up/out; squid cuts stream
of bubbles. Some sat on the images,

like so many tacky lawn chairs propped
for battle by the swimming pool out back.
Just think, the lines aren't long for diving
board, and I can smell another chlorinated

journal entry just begging to jot itself
into memory. The back of the bus is full
of schoolkids who'd rather be underwater
with Atlantis, flying up under that Bermuda

Triangle all magnetized and supportive
of anything metallic, including fake flying
saucers built from discarded *Dr. Who*
props found in a basement on the Isle

of Wight. Catalogued mind chippings
constructed atop a limestone formation,

where all the sea creatures ended up
dying just so the calcium *could* deposit

on a whim. I'm not intrigued about the scars
on the surface waves, as they've not flung
far focus on a seasonal depressive whim,
spewed up out of emotional appetite, timed.

Instant Parable

no crazy in silence more to word
walled off for good i saw an accident
at corner of rosewood and assembly

accidentally creating a crisp vision
in my head of gods running sidewise
up a glass skyscraper fan it backwards

in this asylum territory we work against
time holding out a confederacy in the hope
that something in zany truths *can* save

us from sacrificial nigerian scam letters
across the tempest ocean call a dollar
or more mutations into millions i love you

if you exist or can will you into *eXistenZ*
some hokey video game meditation on unreality
irreal of circle stances reading in a vacuum

forgotten how to read out loud choke
chromatic out of clean there's always a memory
but it's only not there and blank verse can't save

no one from fluttering away out in a sedate
backyard grilling on fire over leaves autumnal
with age full throttle more packaging please

Full-frontal Frontier

Stakes it to ground at the lowest point. Where nexus
recalls Texas just prior to American Civil War, when
a Lone Star was alone on that dry Western expanse
of tumbleweed, bones and jackrabbits; a planter class

was proud and unaware of limits to cultural madness.
Comanche storm border, only to meet an Anglo wall
of blood and frontier politics. Play it off Biblical proud,
amid melodrama of survival and careful acquisitions.

Trilateral Commission

01

sanitizer		clean floors & windows	tv angel & eligible bachelors
ketamine		focus here, on star field	just beyond Andromeda
		oil & questionable neurons	flatland
emir	i	ka	placed <i>directly</i> behind blood of millions

02

parellelogram: bifurcated religion tolerance	mass destruct: fabricated down sand dunes
layered overtop all organic assumption	castaway inside fold edges brainwaves
current events scramble code slashes	red clings to grounds: temple priest
funneled ones & zeros toward seer	political comment – see question?
conquistador, born Islamic bomb	fan magic; spectator sport ants
moonlit meteor: blue flowers	other Nemesis matters dark
Inquisitor: humans 95% ape	Illuminated green surface

03

fatal words emanate from cracks in Precambrian lymphatics
hurtling squid-like underwater in salt & plankton
spare change sprinkled on crumbled sidewalk
dirty hands on shiny worthlessness
revelation's self-fulfilling social
what's left is right of center
encased in my glass
a curator's care
catches me
unaware

Pre-war Histories

seesaw psych o logical
sum man tickle fun bone

shore ten count less numb
burr in sweaty socks after

for rest explore ration self
out to low west turn sun

lit like can dull light in nine
lives felon fabricate credit

card carrying or fin of shark
on silver screen unwashed

angel circular curio city
minotaurized on a Cretan urn

I've always wanted a maze
down in the basement night

bullhorn an other tear or wrist
alert hanging car pal tunnel

sinned Rome coliseum lions
rending Christ into bread

and whine so selfish of me
to log it all away on such

a delicate sticky spied Ur
per hapless heist diamond

citizenry weren't conscious
and fall lowed motion to street

hold up on folk us group
the orbital calls war

Gladhandling

My sense: if we were to prosecute sand
assault, I'd settle water. Breakfast bomb

fragments, one million taxed dollars (Dr. Evil
voice not provided) spent on that Tomahawk

missile. Careful with Kurd-Turk relations,
and handle Shiite population with care. My

count tree 'tis of thee, sweet land of bankruptcy,
of thee I wring. Bling-Bling. Yeah, I've been, like,

here in the street, like, for years...you know
what I'm saying? More arrests for the masses,

and McDonald's *will* take Baghdad for a ride.
For the people: shower you in oil, pave black

streets with gold, and recruit a supermodel
to sell Iraqi plastics for supersaturated world.

Replay grunge. *Nirvana* is an exploding bunker.
If I could take you to a Crimean moment, you

know I'd settle the score, Mr. Disraeli. And
where is your empire now when they need it?

Combat Poem

1.

Bomb *me*.
I flicker here,
awaiting orders.

A front line assault
will fall back upon
the half line after

defeat, my general,
able to leap small
buildings in a single

round. Speaks of young
generations, spontaneous
combustion engines.

Our progress future:
just say that you love me.
Oops, and all surfaces

fall away for a more
perfect union. She states
my rights, so well

why elect another seeing
eye dog detective to house?
Holy and more in Christ.

2.

Save me Edwin Meese,
you're my only hope:
me pagan, you laughing priest.

Bounce back. Blow back,
but who's doing the blowing
once a rolling stone retires?

Recycle bin, it's so red

with envy laden with sub-
urban refuse in kitchen.

Me drive gray gun-metal
auto mobile, you flip finger –
once middle, now stub.

Lost on battlefield, filed
in CIA offices for close exam
my nation, under god, indivisible,

with libertines and justices.
For all who'll lie to sleeping dogs,
and herd cats onto these shining

shores. Sure, you've heard the one
about a pack of intellectuals
who couldn't get a light

in a crowded bar. I'll show
mined games for what they've be-
come. Here, and give

this democracy the crack
smoke it so desperately seeks
while hanging out the library

looking for Friedrich Engels'
never-neverland clone, who looks
like a cat and takes hormones.

3.

Absolut power core
erupts absolutely, and have
I got a camp pain for yours

truly; those peasants
will run screaming for field.
Get a load of these ballots.

Familiar is the figure
of a Family on the throne,
fighting space and open

empire. Of massing, first
aged in small group
environments, coursed

through rule of one-whose-
name-shall-not-be-
mentioned or conferred

to heathen children.
A compositional process
which destroys all hope

of other narratives,
and if there were *other* ways,
the viscosity of these clumps

prevents names to be read
aloud without proper power
structures approving utterance.

Abstract lyrical address
takes place of state of the union,
fomenting violent upheaval in cars.

4.

Could there be a final point
to dialoguing robots?
Not if the covenant has

its way of making copies
free of charge! Copy yourself
on a billiard ball. Roll.

Maybe the language will
gather its progeny,
and set us all straight.

Pro test move meant
more to you than you,
and I support. Watch

port. An exam I nation
of this ad minus straight
shuns motor skills:

flame throw a street's
heavy concrete piece
in .gov mint's fresh wind.

Oh forgot's sake, just
give me the bomb
and step back awhile,

so's it'll all grow up
in smoke and smolder.
Leave on white house

lawn the media, medium,
mediated, remedial voices.
Claim empire as owners,

zoning in on messages.
Green leaves bought
and sold at hinged

presidential door jamb.
Damn the oval office!
Let me at the atomic

structure of flim
flam regime, so's I
can split the melon

into a billion pieces.
Billions and bill ions
of stars tarred

and feathered down
in Florida. Give me
libertarian or give me

death to reap. Public
can master over divine
vengeance, and call

our demo vatic chattel
for one last be heading.
You set your neck here,

along the groove. Don't

mind the steel,
or all that leftover red:

(hive never wit
nest soma ny
nostalgic fools).

Detachable Politics

Starts day, random work. *Say* the screen.
Here's one other side of continent. Glisten.
Shifted out of tectonic loop, and slapped
back into misery for future transgressions

against that sea time. Is it time? How much
time do we have? Do you have the time? Won't
wait, and no I don't *wear* a watch; for it melted
last December, just before the New Year was

old, and somehow things clear up just right
or wrong, depending on perspective, of course.
12 degrees to the left, there's a whole other
world of tanks, jeeps, cyborg anti-aircraft guns,

missile launchers, and blowhard generals itching
for a nice clean glass of oil, so that mechanized
life can keep on truckin' for a few more years
or so. And so it goes, so *they* say. So it's for our

own good, you axiom of evil live vile or veil.
And veiled it all is to streetcrawlers like us,
us millipedes and virtual centripetal centipedes
with stingers removed for safekeeping in DC.

Anyways, the money creeps up from below –
so? What's the use keeping it from blowing
into orbit around earth's eye socket or well
gravity angle? Out spacious room soak, dream

drenched at night. Return home, watch, prop legs,
down dinner, and think about capitalized bricks
with signatures of proud contributors carved
roughly into block and sold for vote or meal

that comes back again in morning's idle light,
where waiting before screen becomes its own
little ritual in a cold pre-war template, lately
temped out to the lowest-paid diplomat in story.

Tiny Business

Perhaps something else is needed, for the lines appear so pale. Shapes of older pictures inform a once-settled country, and *now* the war limits travel. A sameness works on all weather patterns. Where you can be observed, most flocks migrate south, so the north has little chance of catching up. Pick it up, so the signal can't fade into recording arid advertisements more focused; there's a sling surrounding the arm of this galactic system. Three lingering effects on some mad state, and you've got a killer on your hands. No, this crazy one's had enough, and I'll see you on *other* side of green-cheese land. Let's wait. There's a bus coming to ship us off to activity.

Acceptable risks collapse paper, and I can't get my thoughts started as we concede the singularity at the center of all being. Let us pray for no afterlife or rebirth, full proof and settled. You churn inside. As we wait for the sky's answer, normally I'd say the problem's with the gears, but the brakes look overused today. That these images raze tedium is absolutely false, but like all atmospheric conditions, it passes again. It could be this ice, where we once fell into bodies. Assure, if I could, the focal fickle end of life as we know, and there'd be Sheldrake staring back. Did your mother of planet ever teach you how to clean that equator?

Hello, I have the attention span of a gnat. Pleased to meet you. Most settlers won't remember where you've been last night, out in territories old. Limit your discussion to matters at hand, and then *after* stealing, hold it out for sale: an intellectual break from breaking down anguish. In algorithmic form, fatigue has its uses in the contemplation of boredom, despite the crazy sky. Yell "Imprison me!"; you'll be removed from military service as an identity thief. Firewall fake fetus sculpted onto statehouse sanitorium ground – fuck it all. Lightning veins overhead as I drive through sheets of fogged glass, contoured in the dull.

We settle ourselves amid a congregation still fighting among the crumbled streets. Tigers starve in their cages. Amazing crazed, how sweet the frown. How lonely is your flight? It's tough to set table on a future possessed by seated ghosts with knives. Most days, there's barely enough oxygen to fuel talk of discussion. Focus on talk of chemotherapy, and how the pain hallucinates perceived end. Talking care of debts, do you dare take of me, settled inside? Could be I'm talking, but the letters don't hear my voice. Budget crunched beneath rock slide of numbers, we wait for doomsday: there is this plan. So crawl under celestial boo, settle against the essay, and lose you amid a million autobiographies. "Able mantra, exhuming the first biplane to land..." says me, at the closest bank, financing our empire.

Urban Pollination Frenzy

erase
scrape
scrape
scrape
gray
day
out
side
radio
blast
chemical
rock
classic
store
house
basement
weapons
waiting
to
be
kissed
painters
work
sheetrock
mud
onto
ceiling
I
sit
upstairs
working
up
federal
tax
forms
ready
to
send
my
unwilling
contribution
to

Ashcroft
unwilling
gray
disappear
last
few
can't
stand
of
gravel
this
bin
on
New
train
subway
to
Brooklyn

cronies
and
funding
if
would
maybe
we'd
a
longer
I
sound
classic
rock
can
be
laden
a
York
as
we
speak
got
he's
get

where
he'll
film

another

tape

at

taxpayer

expense

French Kiss

momentum carries the baggage as you walk
to class oblivious of thoughts on trans
aggressive attitudinal shifts and chaotic ass
ocean nations where in a middle Atlantic

they play such ahistorical games with past act
shuns and Platonic script is presented end
over end with the polis twirling like a baton
in an expert's toss outside words crawl

up the walls anticipating places where
guards won't be waiting with pikes swords
and halberds in some middle evil pose swear
flanking the academic racket with cuts

quiet in placing all pieces on obvious
board plainly capital is cashed in books
although books won't generate a new synth
thesis even if the global sentiment wills

decree this dead man's properties to ungrate
full living animals declawed and unable to hunt
for focal areas in misted morning uncertainty
conjured up from one dreams of physicists long

dead or stoned into orbit secure coldly out
of bounds dribbling upcourt scanning zones
of control desert offers *no* quarter coins
to place over eyes of the dead men walk

king limps up stones of pyramid gold
den prepared for inevitable nuclear winter
months when we'll all cower in fear and for
get we knew any maths of years gone by fast

stinging here along skin of my arm where
the ants decided to inject an acid form
microphone foretells which fascist will sir
face before bedtime story trolling in closets

Prosperity

Don't tell me. I know, to bury me is to save strict voodoo;
so meaning is a well-intentioned supper among friends,
and the merlot pours down subtle smooth with oaky flavor.

See here, freedom fries. Slap you in a frying pan and sell
your bones for one dollar to society underground street
vendor, looking for space in the cave underneath worn

subway station. Start pedal metal; third rail is worst worm
solution to shitty streets by shipyards – no Marlon Brando
to the cinematic rescue. You, Baltimore crab, selling MDMA

on up I-95, did you realize that they store Kalishnikov
parts in old Pepsi machines? Fake! Fucking Bill O'Reilly
on the dial – give me a chisel and I'll carve your TV

into his coffin. Sap dribbling out where arms went
yesterday, and on the desk, that letter from his landlord
telling just how little time the gods have to spend

on fools. King me. I'm your shadow tutor in Ivy League
halls. When Daddy decides to send the checks, I'll
turn over my brain to your assignment, you small fry.

Atypical Architectures

words appear on white
some time during day

severed aviary
and reptiles sleep on branches ta/k

i

n

k

e

d under head na *no* tech pollution
sinkhole sucking count er clock wise

focus for ward in to drag on core
gold become lead leading under

if the sitting is all
text complains of inaction

severe are sewer streets
lead down pass ages severed light

rattling underneath chair
jackhammer world rhythm

here's an enemy
served up sanded down silver plate

sevac fo lluf erehps esop

loamy soil sandy beach or slippery clay
skin fruit hiding seed

fingering the mantle
crusted mountains squash kid toys gets on water surface skin float galactic arm
place mixed rock out on orbit bit by bit

mystical pleasure fossils sight *i*
sleeping outside a dream *n*

poll lit tickle mirror roar slip *n* *uni* verse
can't hide morons in closets forever

thought signal word signal thought
brain doesn't feel gray

stalagmite build up
there's a cave-in just up ahead

if light has roots
we've been in dark

no sonar for the dark
worms and waterbugs aim for ear

underfoot language comes tumbling
so snake in green grass

so quiet down here
heat coming cracks ground around me

hisses out singular energies

l e f t
o o
s l
t o a d

of hollow fold interior chasm

airless a vacuum of thought
no ideas but in dead letter a-z

heart of domestic conversation
wizened granular image

military/industrial spilled conjuration
catastrophe theory seizes tax money

of peculiar origins starfall season
time before time

e

v

e

recall prestigitator shaving signals off sky
beam focus on Antarctic ice melt

a

m

demonic

random White House perched

atop monumental overflow sewer hell

d

e

h

y

d

r

a

t

searing one on and on
fall forward into the sharp glass

o z o z o z

z o z o z o

o z o z o z

z o z o z o

o z o z o z

Second Articulation

flow nasal and *zoom* economies
if all sold
deregulated futures
we'd live in utopia you
and I have found puzzle
behind viral infection
don't you know bug
grin and bear it forever
I like when you call
or instant message
your fingers across these immense black
distances they say
that we left a footprint
up there with flag
and movie studios
paid big bucks
for a contract on your life
like it or not strangers came
back on the capsule settled into the people
and robbed in your neighborhood
you blind
extracting retinal wall
and replacing it
with a meshwork
of artificial crystal
readying its tiny soul
for a pinprick *invasion*
of squishy networks

CLAYTON A. COUCH (claytonacouch@earthlink.net) lives in Columbia, SC, where he recently completed an MLIS degree at the University of South Carolina. He has published, or will publish, poems in such places as *Big Bridge*, *call: review*, *can we have our ball back?*, *88*, *eratio*, *5_Trope*, *hutt*, *Lost & Found Times*, *moria*, *muse apprentice guild*, *nth Position*, *The Pedestal*, *Pierian Springs*, *Shampoo*, *Say...*, *Tin Lustre Mobile*, *Unpleasant Event Schedule*, *VeRT*, *Word For/Word*, *xStream*, and *Znine*. In late 2004, [effing press](#) in Austin, TX will publish his chapbook, *Artificial Lure*. He is the creator and managing editor of *sidereality* (<http://www.sidereality.com/>) and maintains a weblog called *word placements* (<http://www.claytonacouch.com/blog/>).